NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE

bulletin

Vol. 47/No. 6

April 2004

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

Johnson Inc. Insurance

A Salute to Volunteers

by LESLEY-ANN BROWNE

As you are aware, Volunteer Week, April 18-24, is a time to recognize and express gratitude to dedicated volunteers who work on behalf of numerous groups and for various causes. Volunteer Week was established to recognize the importance of volunteers and to increase public awareness of the enormous role that volunteers play in our communities and certainly in the success of the service organizations. As we once again celebrate Volunteer Week I feel it is important that another valuable group of volunteers should be recognized.

I have spent the last few months working with a volunteer group of teachers who have worked diligently on the organization of the Education Week resource materials and the plans for Education Week 2004. As have previous representatives on this committee, these teachers have volunteered their time to ensure that Education Week continues to be a valuable activity and a celebration of education in this province. I commend them for their hard work and dedication.

Another group of teachers who volunteered their time for Education Week was the organizing committee of the Opening Ceremonies at J.R. Smallwood Middle School in Wabush. The event was well organized, the performances by the students were outstanding, and the warmth and hospitality were overwhelming. The teachers and their committee of parents and retired teachers put off a first class event. They went above and beyond in their preparations for the day and certainly for the reception following the Opening. There was a wide array of Labrador cuisine that was prepared by the teachers and their committee. I have to admit that my first experience eating caribou was a favorable and flavorful one.

Providing advice and helping to organize an event long distance is a challenge at any time, but this group of teachers, and their helpers, helped the planning and the organization go off without a hitch. They were, and continue to be, an extremely dedicated group of volunteers.

Teacher volunteers also play an important role in the committee structure of the NLTA. Committees like Communications/Political Action, Equity Issues, Member Benefits and Services, Professional Issues in Teaching, and Collective Bargaining, to name just a few, are all made up of teachers who receive no remuneration for their time spent working on behalf of their colleagues. The members of the Provincial Executive Council and Branch Executives are also volunteers. These teachers volunteer their time to help with the work of the Association on behalf of the teachers of the province.

Besides the enormous amount of volunteer work that takes place within the Association by the membership, teachers are also active as volunteers within the community. Besides school councils, parent teacher committees, and the like, teachers are involved as volunteers in their local service clubs and community organizations.

I have been involved at many levels with volunteer organizations and have worked with numerous volunteers over the years and many of them have been teachers. As we celebrate Volunteer Week, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the hard work and dedication of teachers as they carry out their roles as volunteers and acknowledge them for the outstanding work they perform in and out of the classrooms of this province.

bulletin

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The Bulletin is published eight times a year during the school year by the Nfld. and Labrador Teachers' Assn., 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1B 1W1.
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Subscription Rate: $16 per year. For subscriptions and address changes contact Printing Services, Ext. 249.

Deadlines for material are:
May Issue: April 1
June Issue: May 1

ISSN-1189-9662

Member of the Canadian Educational Press Association, Canadian Public Relations Society, International Association of Business Communicators, and the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education.

Printed on Recycled Paper

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NLTA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

Completed applications must be received by July 31st

Regulations

NLTA will award six scholarships to dependents of active, retired, disabled or deceased members, subject to the following conditions:

(a) The award will be made upon completion of secondary school and through application to the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association;

(b) The amount of each scholarship will be $1,000;

(c) The award is based on achievement in the Scholarship Exam administered by the Department of Education.

A. Applicant

1. Name: _____
2. Date of Birth: _____
3. MCP Number: _____
4. Name of School: _____
5. School Address: _____
6. Are you presently enrolled in the senior high program in your graduation year? _____

B. Parent

1. Name: _____
2. Phone: _____
3. Home Address _____ Postal Code: _____
4. State years as teacher: from 19___ to 19___ /20___
5. If parent is not an active teacher, give date of retirement or death _____

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant Date

Please mail completed application form prior to July 31st:

Professional Development Division
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road • St. John's • NL • A1B 1W1
Phone 726-3223 or Toll Free: 1-800-563-3599
Fax 726-4302 or Toll Free: 1-877-711-NLTA (6582)

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

GOULDS

Students raise money to support local community charity

Grade 5 students at Goulds Elementary present their cheque for $239.10 to Mr. Randy Connors.

Upon completion of their Core French unit, *Au Cafe*, Grade 5 students at Goulds Elementary had the opportunity to operate an authentic French cafe in their own classrooms. They raised a total of $239.10 which they donated to St. Kevin's Family Aid. The cheque was presented to Mr. Randy Connors by four Grade 5 representatives. "Lots of people will benefit from the generosity of these Goulds Elementary students," Mr. Connors replied when told of their decision to give the money to charity. Grade 5 French teacher, Mrs. Lori Jackman, highly commends the children. "The children could have used the money for anything but they wanted to make a difference. This speaks volumes about the students at Goulds Elementary and how truly giving they are!"

HEATHERTON

Ethel's Old School House

There are many ways people may choose to remember loved ones who have passed away. The residents of the community of Heatherton on the West Coast of the island portion of the province have decided to remember one of their own in a very special way.

On December 12, 2002, retired teacher Ethel Macdonald passed away at the age of 84. Ethel had been active in the community for many years and was instrumental in ensuring that her students and people in surrounding communities knew how to read. In her early years of teaching she travelled by train and boarded in the community of Flat Bay. She earned the sum of $30 per month in those early days.

In July of 2003 a special ceremony was held in Heatherton to celebrate Ethel's life and dedication to the community. The ceremony was attended by family and friends who held Ethel in very high regard and valued her contribution to the community. Ethel's seven children attended the ceremony and were presented with an incense burner in honour of her memory. At the conclusion of the ceremony a special dedication was made that also honoured Ethel's memory. The building that Ethel taught in for her many years of teaching was named in her memory – "Ethel's Old School House 1927".

Four of Ethel's children stand in front of the building renamed in their mother's honour.

The old school house was renamed by the people in the community to remember the history of the building. It is now used as a community building for meetings and community events.

Ethel was married to William Macdonald who passed away in 1997. They had celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1992.

NAIN

Janeway Fundraising Days at Jens Haven Primary

As in previous years, the students of Jens Haven Primary in Nain have continued to fundraise in support of the Janeway Children's Hospital. Combined with totals from the Grades 4-12 school, they raised $333 for the year 2000, $277 for the year 2001, $264 for the year 2002, and $400 for the year 2003. This year, parents and teachers made treats that the children could buy during the Valentine's Day Bake Sales. Each day during

the week leading up to Valentine's Day, children paid a quarter to participate in special days such as Hat Day, Crazy Hair Day, Dress Up Day, Pajama Day, and Valentine Colour Day. A Valentine's Day assembly was held on February 13 where children could pay to participate in a jellybean and a mystery cake guessing game and a cupcake walk. The highlight of this fundraising event was the initiative of a Grade 3 student, Denika Lyall, to sell her own Valentine tattoos with the help of her friends. This helped generate additional dollars and over the span of two weeks, a final total of $480 was raised for the Janeway. These fundraising events have shown the children of Jens Haven how important it is to donate to the Janeway.

Students at Jens Haven Primary participate in special events during their Janeway Fundraising Days.

Young Mathematicians – "easy as π"

Young Mathematicians 2004 was held in February at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in Corner Brook as part of the district-wide workshops hosted by the Corner Brook/Deer Lake/St. Barbe School District. Students with a real interest and talent in mathematics had an opportunity to work with other students and teachers who shared that interest in a series of activities to enhance their mathematical potential, and, in particular, their problem-solving capabilities. One hundred and thirty-two elementary students from 15 schools participated. Students came from all parts of the school district including the Northern Peninsula, White Bay, Bay of Islands, Pasadena, Deer Lake, and Corner Brook. Many schools use aspects of this event to host their own Math Day at the school level.

In addition to developing positive attitudes towards problem-solving, participation in Young Mathematicians has been an excellent vehicle to help students achieve many of the provincially prescribed, elementary outcomes. Students learn to solve non-routine problems using appropriate problem-solving strategies. They discuss and share solutions to problems and are encouraged to think and evaluate why they chose a particular strategy. In addition, students have many opportunities to work with others in a group setting to collaborate and solve problems.

The day consisted of three different events: Math League; Math Relay; and Math Treasure Hunt. In a field of 33 teams, St. Gerard's School in Corner Brook finished in first place in the Math League competition. Team members included Andrew Flynn, David Gale, Asmita Sodhi, and Stephen Warford. In the Math Relay in the afternoon, the team of Beverly Broughton, Andrew King, Robyn Langdon, and Timothy Reid from Elwood/Xavier in Deer Lake came out on top. The Treasure Hunt title was captured by the team from Main River Academy in Pollard's Point that included Emma Hose, Joshua Hynes, Adam Jackson, and Nadine Lovell.

"Sign me up for next year," was a common expression heard from those in attendance. Congratulations to all participants on a great day!

Students from St. Gerard's School capture first place in the Math League competition.

Main River Academy in Pollard's Point capture the Treasure Hunt title.

For the past three years, School District 3 has also hosted a variety of district-wide workshops for elementary students, i.e. Young Authors' Workshop, Young Artists' Workshop, and Young Mathematicians.

Interested students were invited to attend a series of workshops offered by teachers and interested community volunteers to involve students in a variety of hands-on activities to enhance their different story-telling, artistic, and problem-solving abilities. Students were permitted to leave their regular classes to attend these one-day workshops. These days have been a tremendous success in the eyes of the students and teachers involved.

HARBOUR GRACE

Robotics winners to showcase skills at international competition

The Robotics Team at St. Francis School in Harbour Grace are winners of the Provincial Lego League Robotics Competition. The team placed first in three of the four categories including Robot Performance, Robot Design and Programming, and Teamwork. They also won a gold medal for first place overall, as well as the Director's Cup. This trophy comes with an invitation to represent the province in Atlanta, Georgia in April. "They will have the opportunity to showcase their engineering skills on an international stage and showcase what young Newfoundlanders have to offer the world," says Norman Littlejohn, Technology Education Teacher at St. Francis.

The Robotics Team at St. Francis School proudly display their awards from the Provincial Lego League Robotics Competition.

The team was the third highest scoring school for the Skills Canada Award. "As a result of our students' exposure to Robotics, every junior high school in Avalon West has been provided with the kits necessary to begin their own robotics programs, so we've already had quite an impact," says Mr. Littlejohn. "We can only imagine what other doors will be opened for our students by their experience in Atlanta."

Photos of the competition can be viewed on the school website, www.stfrancis.k12.nf.ca, by following the "Photo Album" link.

SUMMERFORD

Learning... a class act at Coaker Academy

It really was a class act during Education Week as Coaker Academy's English 3201 students led their fellow students in a fun and adventurous learning activity – Coaker Academy's Multimedia Fair.

The road to the fair began with the assigning of an independent novel project which required the students to create three media products that demonstrated their knowledge and skills. The productions ranged from the written element to audio-visual format. The students displayed ambition beyond expectations as they took full advantage of the wide range of media styles available and created web pages, portraits, handmade models, music videos and movies that explored the chosen novels in an inventive and refreshing manner.

As parents arrived with truckloads of materials, the company of students set up their displays in the gymnasium. The *Waiting for Time* display included an 8" x 11" hut that was decorated with memorabilia from the time period. The *A Matter of Honor* display included a miniature of the London Bridge and a map game that required participants to trek across Europe in search of the Czar's Icon. Among other media forms, students interpreted the fantastical elements of *The Fellowship of the Ring* through a music video and short film (student aspirations as dancers and actors took a minor hit, but the audience was impressed nonetheless).

Survivor teams from Coaker Academy gather in the school gym for question period.

Unsatisfied with merely displaying their projects, the dexterous group of students organized a school-wide survivor game intended to provide an interactive and entertaining alternative learning experience. Each homeroom entered a team and during scheduled visits to the gym the teams scrutinized the various novel displays in search of information they would need to be successful during the survivor challenges later in the day.

The afternoon began with each team displaying their costume and demonstrating their team cheer. Innovation and creativity were widespread as teams chanted, danced and engaged in acrobatics. The challenges, designed to locate the best readers, viewers and listeners, included an obstacle course and a question period that tested the erudition acquired throughout the day's activities. Prizes were awarded for best-dressed and most-spirited, but the overall winners proved to be the best readers, listeners and viewers in the school.

"The Fair proved not only to be a learning experience for those students involved in the presentations but also to those who were witness to the degree of effort and ability of those involved in the preparation and execution of the event," said Mr. Jonathan Williams, English teacher at Coaker Academy. "With regards to education, this fellowship of students was waiting for a time to go above and beyond. For them and their school, their projects were a matter of honor and pride. Congratulations to all."

ST. JOHN'S

Teacher receives 2003 CEC Outstanding Achievement Award

Mikki Spracklin, who has been described by her teaching colleagues as "having a commitment to exceptional children that is evident in both her personal and professional life", has been awarded the 2003 Newfoundland and Labrador Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Outstanding Achievement Award.

Ms. Spracklin was one of the first graduates from Memorial University's Bachelor of Special Education program in 1974, and since that time she has worked

Pictured l-r: Wayne Nesbit and Glenn Sheppard of the CEC, Mikki Spracklin, David Philpott and Brenda Smith of the CEC.

enthusiastically untiringly as a "driving force" behind the development and implementation of education programs for children and youth with special educational needs. Her career has been characterized by enduring patience, a positive attitude and a tireless energy in working with her students.

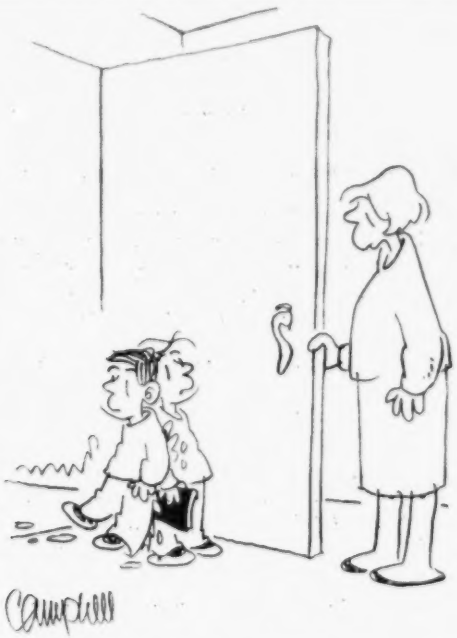
Ms. Spracklin currently teaches at Booth Memorial High School in St. John's where she is regarded with high esteem. A colleague described her contribution as follows: "Whether students are developmentally delayed or truly gifted, Mikki has teaching strategies to offer which can help these students to progress through the education system and to be all that they can be."

Hats off to Mikki Spracklin on her remarkable achievement.

Student fundraiser takes the cake

In February, cakes decorated in a Valentine's Day theme were registered for Macdonald Drive Junior High School's Fourth Annual Cake Decorating Contest and Auction. Mr. K. Park and his team judged first and second place cakes at each grade level. On Friday afternoon, classes anxiously crowded into the gym to bid their collected funds. Mr. Blair Loveless of Fitzpatrick's Auctioneering Services energetically auctioned 106 cakes, raising approximately $2,500. A portion of these proceeds will be donated to the Janeway Hospital.

(cont'd. on page 8)



"We worked with glue today. This is my seat mate, Billy."

The "Funniest Cake" award went to the "What's Love Got to Do With It?" entry. The students' imaginations ran wild as they produced cakes depicting "Bee Mine", "Love Boat", "Be Mine Bear", hearts, a truck, a mailbox, a snake and many other original creations. As one student said, "baking, decorating, and auctioning was fun, but eating the cakes was the best fun of all!"

A truck cake was just one of the many entries registered for Macdonald Drive Junior High School's Fourth Annual Cake Decorating Contest and Auction.

Teacher Appreciation Contest a tremendous success

The winners of the two Teacher Appreciation Night contests sponsored by Johnson Incorporated enjoyed their prize packages on March 6 at Mile One Stadium in St. John's.

As part of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the NLTA Group Insurance Plan, Johnson's sponsored two separate contests for teachers. One of the Teacher Appreciation Night contests was solely for school representatives and branch executive members. Fifty pairs of tickets to the St. John's Maple Leafs game were awarded to school representatives and branch executive members. The winners, and their guests, enjoyed the hockey game between the St. John's Maple Leafs and the Toronto Roadrunners on March 6 at Mile One Stadium.

Six other teachers were also in attendance at the game and were winners of prize packages that provided transportation, a night's accommodation at the Delta St. John's Hotel, two tickets to the Leafs game and spending money. Six prize packages were awarded in all from across Newfoundland and Labrador. The winners were: Tonya Legge, Mushunu Innu Natuashish School, Natuashish (Nutak Labradorimi Branch); Gail Scott, G.C. Rowe Junior High, Corner Brook (Humber Branch); Dana Pittman, Coaker Academy, Summerford (Notre Dame Branch); Maureen Kearley, St. George's School, English Harbour East (Rushoon-Terrenceville Branch); Suzanne Chafe, Harbour Grace Primary, Harbour Grace (Carbonear Branch); and Heather Skirving, I.J. Samson Junior High, St. John's (St. John's Centre Branch).

Three other teachers were honoured that same evening as part of *The Newfoundland Herald* Honor Thy Teacher Contest. The three winners – Beverley Noseworthy, Whitbourne Elementary, Whitbourne, Gerard Fitzpatrick, Brother Rice Junior High, St. John's, and Paul King, Laval High School, Placentia – were at centre ice with NLTA President Fred Douglas to drop the puck.

NLTA President Fred Douglas congratulates the winners of the Teacher Appreciation Night contest at Mile One Stadium: back row (l-r): Heather Skirving, Gail Scott, Fred Douglas, Maureen Kearley, and Suzanne Chafe; front row (l-r): Tonya Legge and Dana Pittman.

Arts and Heritage Career Showcase scheduled for Fall 2004

An Arts and Heritage Career Showcase is being organized for the fall of 2004 by the Association of Cultural Industries (ACI) and the Association of Heritage Industries (AHI). This unique event is aimed at informing high school students and other youth of the many career opportunities that exist in the cultural sector, at a local, national and international level. Through interactive demonstrations and presentations, the students will gain information on job opportunities and on how to train for a career in this dynamic and growing sector.

While culture is one of the fastest growing sectors of the provincial economy, it is often overlooked by traditional career fairs and by students and parents when considering careers. There is a need to expand notions about the many opportunities for employment in this sector, encompassing the creative, technical and administrative fields.

This day-long event will take place at the Arts and Culture Centres in St. John's, Gander and Corner Brook, with a venue in Labrador to be announced. The

morning will consist of an inspirational keynote address, followed by live, interactive presentations that demonstrate the variety of career options in culture. The students will then have the opportunity to interact with arts and heritage professionals in sessions during the afternoon. Information packages will be available to students outlining the training requirements, job descriptions and employment opportunities in every sector of the cultural industries.

Further details will be forthcoming, but tentative provincial dates are as follows: St. John's – October 12; Gander – November 2; Corner Brook – November 4-5; Happy Valley-Goose Bay – Venue/date to be announced.

For further information, please contact Lucy Drown at 709-738-0200 or email at chrb@nfld.net.

Canadian Council for Geographic Education forms local chapter

If there are topics concerning geography or our environment that you'd like more information about, or teaching resources for elements of any Geographic, Environmental Science, or Social Science aspects of the K-12 curriculum, the Newfoundland and Labrador chapter of the Canadian Council for Geographic Education (CCGE) would like to hear from you. The local chapter of the CCGE has both K-12 and university educators with expertise in geographic education curriculum and professional development.

The new CCGE Chapter is a forum where all aspects of Geography and Geographical Education can be discussed, ideas exchanged, and resources shared. The purpose is to promote Geographic Education throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, and to demonstrate the value of Geography in understanding the environment and culture of our province, as well as throughout Canada and the world at large. Membership is free and is open to everyone interested in Geography, the environment, or Geographic Education throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

What can the CCGE and the Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter offer you? The CCGE is supported by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. It has a variety of resources available to teachers of Geography, including maps, web links, and information sheets covering numerous aspects of the Geography of our province, Canada, and the world. The CCGE is active throughout Canada and provides the opportunity to interact with teachers of Geography across the country.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter will provide a focus for geographic education in the province. They have a collection of resources, including maps, photographs, slides, and information sheets. The Chapter has prepared (or are preparing) CDs dealing with several aspects of Geography, provincially, nationally, and globally, which will be available for free distribution to schools. Interests span the gamut of Geography, including the regional geography of Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada; the environment, including Climate, Weather, and Storms; Climate Change and Variability; Glaciation; Rivers; Winds and Dunes; Volcanoes; Mass Movements; Coastlines and Beaches; Sea Level Changes; Oceanology and Ocean Currents; Biogeography and the Biological Environment, including Forests, Wetlands, and Marine Environments; People and Demographics; Population; Urban & Suburban Geography; Recognizing a Sense of Place, and analyzing how to look at your own community geographically; Cultural and Historical Geography; Political Geography; Cartography; Satellite Images, Aerial Photographs, and Remote Sensing Techniques; Terrestrial Resources; Marine Resources; Resource Management; Environment-Human Relationships; and Environmental Change and Sustainability.

The Chapter has already organized one in-service for teachers of Geography and Environmental Science in the Avalon East School District, and they would be pleased to offer in-service sessions to teachers and districts throughout the province, as well as arranging for guest speakers or teleconference sessions.

For more information about Geography or the CCGE, contact Dr. Norm Catto, Professor of Geography, Memorial University, St. John's, NL, A1B 3X9, Tel: 709-737-8413, Fax: 709-737-3119, ncatto@mun.ca, or visit the CCGE website at www.ccge.org.

CANADA

Students create their own round-the-world expedition

In March, students from different parts of Canada took part in the first virtual classroom experimental school project organized by the Department of Canadian Heritage's Virtual Museum of Canada. Participants included elementary and high school students from Buckingham and Kangiqsualujjuaq in Quebec, Ottawa in Ontario, and Gander and St. John's in Newfoundland and Labrador. The teachers involved in this province are Janet Toope, Holy Heart of Mary High School in St. John's, and Joe Philpott and Kathy Morris, both of St. Paul's Intermediate in Gander.

Entitled "Captain Bernier's Expedition," the virtual classroom project involves imagining a virtual expedition around the world. It takes its inspiration from the exhibit "Ilititaa...Bernier, His Men and the Inuit,"

presented by the *Musee maritime du Quebec* and accessible through the Virtual Museum of Canada. "Captain Bernier's Expedition" is an innovative, large-scale school project that enables the Virtual Museum of Canada and its partners to work directly with students.

The *Musee maritime du Quebec* exhibit is the starting point for the virtual classroom project. It tells the story of Captain Joseph-Elzear Bernier and his men, who crossed the Canadian Arctic in the early twentieth century. Their journey resulted in an encounter between two cultures — Inuit and Francophone.

The interactive project was undertaken with assistance from the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN), the Communications Research Centre Canada (CRC), and the National Research Council Canada (NRC).

The Virtual Museum of Canada is a unique portal that presents a multitude of narratives and treasures from Canadian museums. This gateway was created by the Department of Canadian Heritage together with other federal organizations, educational institutions, private-sector firms, and more than 1,000 museums. The Virtual Museum of Canada is part of a strategy that seeks to promote Canadian culture on the Internet. To visit the Museum, visit www.virtualmuseum.ca.

Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy

Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy is a unique professional development opportunity. The program is open to teachers of social studies and related subjects, including political science, history, law, civics, or native studies, currently teaching from Grades 4 to 12. Each November, the program brings approximately 70 teachers from across the country together for an intensive, informative, unforgettable week on Parliament Hill.

The next session of the Teachers Institute will take place October 31 to November 5, 2004 on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Applications for the session are now being accepted. The deadline for submission is April 30, 2004. Teachers seeking information on the program or an application form are asked to visit the Teachers Institute section of the Parliamentary Internet site at www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/education/teachers/index-e.htm. The site contains a description of the program, photos and comments from previous participants, as well as an online brochure and application form.

These documents are also available in print by calling the Library of Parliament's information services at 613-992-4793 in the national capital region or toll free at 1-866-599-4999.

For further information please contact Debbie Lee, Project Officer, Parliamentary Public Programs, Tel: 613-996-0475 or via email at leedeb@parl.gc.ca.

Student Vote 2004

Student Vote 2004 is a non-partisan, educational initiative inspiring a habit of electoral and community participation among students that will operate during the upcoming Federal election, in all provinces and territories across Canada, targeting the high school and intermediate grade levels.

Registered schools receive an instructional resource and other materials, at no cost, for use during the campaign period. Through in-class lessons and school-wide activities, students learn about the democratic process, and become aware of the party platforms and local candidates.

Closer to Student Election Day, schools receive election kits containing: ballots, ballot boxes and an operations manual. Students take over the roles of Returning Officers and Poll Clerks, and conduct a school-wide vote. Once students have voted on their local candidates, the results are tabulated and called into the Student Vote 2004 Returning Office. Results are broadcast on partnering television networks and published in *The Telegram* the following day.

The successful trial program operated during the Ontario Provincial Election, which involved over 800 schools and introduced over 333,000 students to the electoral process. The expectation for Student Vote 2004 is for a million students to cast a ballot, in every riding across Canada.

To register your school for Student Vote 2004, please visit www.studentvote2004.ca or call 1-866-488-8775.

New media literacy tools at CTF

New educational resources developed by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) aim to help Canadian teachers and parents nurture the media critical thinking skills of their students and children. The tools are a follow-up to the Federation's *Kids' Take on Media* national survey involving 5,700 children and youth in 122 schools in 37 different school boards in every province and territory. The 2003 survey showed that nearly half the students say they receive no parental guidance on which TV programs they can watch, and two-thirds report that no one says which video or computer games they can play, or for how long. According to the report, these are the children who are more likely to regard media violence as benign.

"Clearly, parents and teachers have a crucial role to play in helping young people sort through the wealth of media in our society," says CTF President Terry Price. "Students who watch the news at home regularly show up at school with questions and concerns about everything from birth control to international terrorism. That is why we believe that media literacy, just like any literacy, is about helping children to develop the ability to understand, interpret and communicate," says Ms. Price.

In cooperation with Family Service Canada, CTF developed a workshop template for parents that can be adapted to the needs of specific parent groups. The workshop, while providing practical tips and an easy-to-follow checklist for parents, is an excellent complement to the *Bulletin to Parents* produced earlier by CTF and available online.

CTF has also developed a teacher/student activity guide to help teachers and to encourage students to think critically about the media in their lives.

"In a well-rounded approach to media literacy, children and youth learn about media and with media. Learning about media helps children understand and interpret the ideas and concepts they encounter. Learning with media teaches children how to access and use media in productive ways. These new CTF resources offer activities and tips to help parents and teachers do both of these things, because the habits children develop around media use in their early years can last a lifetime."

The two documents carry the Kids' Take on Media banner and are entitled *Teacher/Student Activity Guide and Me*, and *My Kids and the Media: A Workshop for Parents*.

The resources can be downloaded at www.ctf-fce.ca free of charge. If hard copies are required, they can be ordered for $10, which includes the full study report conducted by Erin Research.

Corrections

The March issue of *The Bulletin* contained an article on Past President and Honourary Member Mr. Hudson Davis. Unfortunately, Mr. Davis' name was spelled incorrectly. The editor apologizes for the error.

For information on the MUN Ph.D. Program in Education, including admission requirements and application procedures, please refer to www.mun.ca/educ/PhD.

JOHN GOSSE, 1942 – 2003

On November 13, 2003, the lives of those close to John Gosse changed forever when we lost a very special friend, exceptional colleague, dedicated teacher, great community leader, and a fantastic family man.

John Gosse

John was a shining example in the field of education. He possessed a unique gift for teaching and his passion for language, literature and social studies was second to none. His energy, enthusiasm and dedication both as a school administrator and a teacher were boundless.

John also loved the town of Whitbourne. Over the years he was a tireless volunteer in most organizations in the community but in later years he had a special love for his church and the Whitbourne Historical Society. He will be greatly missed in the whole community.

All the staff at Whitbourne High were privileged to have known and worked with John. The students, parents, and staff in particular, as well as the community of Whitbourne in general, are much better off because of his tireless efforts. John's warmth, humor, and enthusiasm were an inspiration to us all. The world is a much better place because of John Gosse.

May God keep and protect his precious spirit, a spirit that will live forever in our hearts.

John is predeceased by his daughter Catherine White and survived by his wife Mary, daughter Susan George, sons John and Peter and son-in-law Ben White and their families, and 10 brothers and sisters.

(Submitted by colleague and friend Bill Mercer.)

NLTA Group Insurance Celebrates 40th Anniversary

by EDWARD HANCOCK

"April 2004, then, is a time to recognize and celebrate the significant effort and achievement of those NLTA leaders (both Executive and Staff) of 40 years ago as they brought this benefit to teachers in 1964."

The month of April 2004 marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the NLTA Group Insurance Plan. The Plan was first established in April, 1964 following several years of efforts by the Association. In the Fall of 1963, the Association engaged Johnson Insurance Limited to act as brokers and survey all insurance companies licenced to do business in the province, and to invite these carriers to submit quotations for a teachers' group insurance plan. The response was positive and a follow-up survey of teachers indicated a substantial degree of interest in a plan that would include health insurance, life insurance and long-term disability insurance. Specifications were forwarded to the 20 interested companies and in February 1964, the NLTA Provincial Executive selected, from the bids received, the carriers for the three options in the Group Insurance Plan.

The March 1964 issue of *The Bulletin* provided the announcement of the Plan to teachers. That announcement included the following: *Teachers will be able to buy term life and income protection insurance at less than half the rates paid for individual policies. Rates for health, surgical and medical coverage are lower than group rates charged by other companies . . . Teachers may choose either one, or any two, or all three options.*

The article in *The Bulletin* then went on to give the details of the life insurance; health, accident, surgical, medical insurance; and long term disability insurance. At the 1964 NTA Annual Convention (March 31- April 2), there was an official report on the "insurance scheme for NTA members", with a detailed explanation of the plan by Mr. Len Stirling, representative of Johnson Insurance. The minutes of that Convention note: *Mr. Stirling then went ahead with his brief explanation of the plan, after which many questions were asked by the delegates . . . Time was then taken out for lunch which took place at the Canadian Legion. This lunch was the compliments of the Johnson Insurance Company.*

Enrolment information and forms were mailed to teachers early in April, 1964. For those applying, deduction of premiums commenced in June with benefits under the Plan becoming applicable as of July 1.

It would be ten years later, in 1974, that the Association was successful in formalizing (in the first-ever Provincial Collective Agreement) an arrangement for government to share the cost of premiums for health, term life, and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. Shortly thereafter, responsibility for the Group Insurance Plan was placed with a Board of Trustees comprised of teachers appointed by the NLTA Provincial Executive and chaired by a Provincial Executive member.

It is worth noting that the inception of the NLTA Group Insurance Plan marked the beginning of what has been a 40 year continuing relationship between the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and Johnson Insurance Limited (now Johnson Inc.). During that time, Johnson Inc. have acted as the Plan brokers in preparing specifications for the various options within the Plan, seeking quotations from various underwriters, providing advice to the NLTA Executive (and later the Group Insurance Trustees), and providing plan administration services. The NLTA Group Insurance Plan is owned and operated by teachers through the Group Insurance Trustees. Johnson Inc. serves as the Plan administrator and Johnson personnel work closely with Trustees in an advisory capacity as Trustees carry out their significant responsibilities.

April 2004, then, is a time to recognize and celebrate the significant effort and achievement of those NLTA leaders (both Executive and Staff) of 40 years ago as they brought this benefit to teachers in 1964. The names of many of the individuals who played a significant role in this development would be recognizable also for their other contributions to the NLTA. These would include such leaders as Hudson Davis, Brother A.F. Brennan, W. Claude Robbins, N. Ray Wight, Clifford Andrews, Harry Cuff and Roger Simmons. The significant work of Len Stirling (who retired as Vice-President of Johnson Inc. in 2002) in this cause is also deserving of recognition. It is to these, and many others, that we owe the legacy of the NLTA Group Insurance Plan.

Edward Hancock is Executive Director of the NLTA.

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

Johnson Insurance

Celebrating Teachers

2004 marks the 40th anniversary of the relationship between the NLTA and Johnson Inc.

In honor of this milestone, we would like to give you the opportunity to celebrate your fellow teachers.

Do you know a teacher who *'goes above and beyond'*? If so, we invite you to submit a testimonial to this teacher explaining how he or she contributes to the school and / or the community through their role as an educator. Submissions will be selected and articles on these individuals will appear in upcoming issues of The Bulletin.

If you know someone deserving of this special recognition, using the email address below, send us:

- their name
- their community and school
- their background...for example, their years teaching, their education, etc.
- what makes this person deserving of this special recognition (maximum 600 words please).
- your contact information

Submissions should be sent to:
celebratingteachers@johnson.ca

CONTACT 2004

Theme: What Teachers Need

AUGUST 8-11, 2004
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY
ANTIGONISH, NOVA SCOTIA

Keynotes: Fred Crouse
The Connected Teacher: Teaching in a Technological Age

Steven Van Zoost
The Reflective Teacher

Concurrent Sessions:

- Motivating Disengaged Students
- Authentic Assessment
- Classroom Management
  (offered in French and English)
- Maintaining Your Life Balance
- Maintaining a Positive Staff Environment

CONTACT is sponsored by the teacher organizations of the Atlantic Region.

Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation

NBTA

NLTA

GUIDELINES FOR CONTACT 2004

1. Initial submission of names of delegates to CONTACT shall be the responsibility of the **NLTA Branch**. In addition to applications submitted by teachers to the Branch, nominations may be made at a Branch meeting.

2. a) Applications/nominations from Branches shall be completed **on or before May 21st** and submitted to the NLTA for final approval as per guidelines in number 5.
   b) Final approval of nominees for CONTACT shall occur at the Professional Issues in Teaching Committee's June meeting.

3. Where Branches do not submit nominations on time, the Branch may forfeit any right to have a representative at CONTACT. Decisions of the Professional Issues in Teaching Committee shall be final.

4. A Branch is permitted to send up to three (3) nominees which shall be prioritized according to preference of delegate(s) to attend. Branches are asked to consider the following when prioritizing their nominees:
   a) Branch nominees who have not already attended a CONTACT Conference.
   b) Nominees that have been prioritized in previous years but have not attended.
   c) Nominees for which the Conference will have the most relevance.

5. The Professional Issues in Teaching Committee shall act as the Selection Committee for representatives to CONTACT and shall be governed by the following guidelines:
   a) Teachers as prioritized by the Branches shall be the teachers selected for CONTACT.
   b) Branches which have not had a member attend a CONTACT Conference shall be given first priority.
   c) Priority for Branches which already have had representation at CONTACT shall be based on the time lapse since previous attendance.

6. Teachers shall be notified of acceptance as soon as possible following the selection of representatives by the Professional Issues in Teaching Committee.

7. a) Representatives, where possible, shall be informed of the expenses of CONTACT, how much NLTA will provide and how much will be the individual teacher's responsibility.
   b) Transportation costs shall be based on the cheapest mode of transportation possible.
   c) Selected delegates to CONTACT must submit a non-refundable $25.00 deposit towards their registration. This will be submitted to the NLTA CONTACT Registrar within two weeks of notification of selection.

CONTACT APPLICATION FORM

TEACHERS MUST FORWARD APPLICATIONS TO THEIR BRANCH BY MAY 7, 2004 FOR SUBMISSION TO CONTACT SELECTION COMMITTEE. APPLICATIONS THAT ARE NOT SUBMITTED THROUGH THEIR BRANCH WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Branch

Name of Teacher

School Address

Postal Code

School Telephone

Home Address

Postal Code

Home Telephone

Have you attended CONTACT before? ❑ No ❑ Yes Year

Description:
(qualifications, experience, interests and NLTA involvement)

Date

Signature of Branch President

BRANCHES MUST FORWARD NOMINEES TO NLTA OFFICE NO LATER THAN **MAY 21, 2004.**

Return this form by fax or mail to:
Beverley Park, Administrative Officer, Professional Development
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Fax: 726-4302 or 1-877-711-6582 (toll-free)

Education Week 2004

Opening Ceremonies… A Class Act

by LESLEY-ANN BROWNE

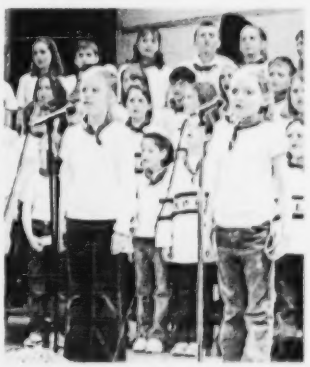
On March 8, J.R. Smallwood Middle School in Wabush was a buzz of activity as students, teachers, parents, and invited guests celebrated the opening ceremonies of Education Week 2004.

The planning for the event had started many weeks earlier and principal Harry LaCosta was thrilled to have been asked to host the event at J.R. Smallwood. He formed a volunteer committee at his school comprised of parents, teachers, and retired teachers who looked after the plans for the event.

Guests at the Opening Ceremonies included: Fred Douglas, President of the NLTA; the Honourable John Ottenheimer, Minister of Education; Dr. Alice Collins, Dean of Education, Memorial University, who was also Honourary Chairperson for Education Week 2004; Anne Perry, Chairperson of the Provincial Education Week Committee; Jeff Thompson, Director of Education with the Labrador School District; and numerous other invited guests including community leaders from Wabush and Labrador City.

The Master of Ceremonies for the Opening was Theresa Gale. Theresa is a French Immersion teacher at J.R. Smallwood who has been teaching in Labrador West for the past 14 years. The event flowed smoothly under her direction and her skills as a master of ceremonies were evident throughout the day.

Performances at the Opening included the Menihek Band under the direction of Mr. Jim Cooper. The band includes 40 students, many of whom have participated in performances in Toronto and New York. The A.P. Low Primary Grade 3 Classroom Choir, under the direction of Ms. Marlene Smith, was outstanding in their performance of *Let's Make a Difference*. The J.R. Smallwood Grade 7 Band, directed by Mr. Paul Harris, was truly wonderful in their rendition of *Syncopated Rock*.



The new Provincial Education Week Song was performed for the first time by the J.R. Smallwood Grade 5 Classroom Choir. They also performed a piece entitled *Little People* from the musical *Les Miserables*. Their performance was outstanding and a great addition to the program.

Sandra Branton sang the *Ode to Labrador* and the *Ode to Newfoundland*. Sandra is an Art and Core French teacher at J.R. Smallwood who also assists with the music program.

Her beautiful singing voice was a great way to start and end the ceremonies.

The Education Week Proclamation was read by students from J.R. Smallwood. Sarah Bourgeois and Ryan Higdon did a great job of reading the proclamation before the official signing ceremony. Ryan also read the description of the new Education Week logo that was unveiled and launched at these Opening Ceremonies.

One highlight of the Opening Ceremonies was the viewing of the J.R. Smallwood Middle School Education Week video. About 15 minutes in length, the video showcased the school, its students and the programs available to them. Through the assistance and creative work of Tech Education teacher, Paul Smith, the video was a first-class production of student life at J.R. Smallwood Middle School.

The Opening Ceremonies were webcast again this year so that anyone who wished could view the activities. The assistance of Robert Swyer with the Labrador Board and Jim Tuff with the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation were instrumental in ensuring that this took place. As well,

various schools from across Newfoundland and Labrador brought greetings to students at J.R. Smallwood through the ICLT vclass program. This was a great addition to the Opening Ceremonies and brought together students from all across the province. This goes to show that long distances do not cause complications and great things can happen through cooperation.

The provincial Education Week Committee welcomes feedback on this year's activities. Plans for the organization of Education Week 2005 will be getting underway in the next few months.

Education Week Logo

unveiled March 8, 2004
at J.R. Smallwood Middle School
Wabush, Labrador

The four blocks symbolize the foundation of either a building or of learning. They represent both a solid foundation as well as the traditional blocks that most children are familiar with.

Atop the blocks the chimney represents an arrow pointing to the future. This symbolizes the growth and the importance of education.

Together the blocks, the chimney, the arrow, and all elements are representative of a solid foundation for education and the future that is provided by our teachers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Accountability Policy: Responsive and Responsible

by BEVERLEY PARK

For some time now the question of accountability has been at the top of the agenda of most teacher organizations across the country, including the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). It has figured prominently in our NLTA priorities for the past three years. During that time, we have been represented on a national workgroup to study the issue; we have researched accountability models across the country and around the world; we have held focus groups with our members; and we have examined other policies in committee to draft our own for our teachers here in Newfoundland and Labrador. At its February meeting, the Provincial Executive Council endorsed the draft and made a recommendation to Joint Council which then approved it as Association policy. The policy defines accountability and reviews the following areas: accountability as shared responsibility; professional accountability; linking accountability with the vision and goals of public education; focus on student learning; and accountability and reporting.

In some ways one would say that this is a reaction to the cult of testing which seems to be permeating education. Admittedly, there is a measure of responsiveness. Reports like that from the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS) and other such performance measures require a response, and we believe that this is an appropriate one. It refutes the assumption that a proper assessment of our education system can be reduced only to measured criteria. But it goes one step further – it says that we are not afraid of professional accountability. In fact, here is what we believe it to be.

A cornerstone of this policy is that accountability is a shared obligation, and each of the partners in the educational endeavour has some jurisdiction over and some responsibility for it. We, as teachers, accept our part of the responsibility – but we can fulfill our commitment to and be effective in making the education system work for our students *if and only if* all the other partners do the same.

Another foundational element of our policy is that assessment of education is not a simple exercise in counting… i.e. standardized testing. Onora O'Neill in the 2002 Reith Lectures, a series of public radio lectures sponsored by Cambridge University, speaking of accountability in the health care system, refers to a "performance indicator culture," i.e. that which "counts and measures" as an assessment of whether or not the system is working. Her caution about the health care system can be readily applied to education. "The problem of the performance indicator is that it assumes that we can get measurement. Of course we can for some things, not for other things." She goes on the say that, "If you don't have a unit, counting is bogus – and that is the real problem of the performance indicator culture. So show me a unit that really works, that doesn't change its size every year and that isn't subjective, and I think counting's great."

In a CTF poll conducted by Vector Research in April 2003, Canadians surveyed favoured by a 2 to 1 margin teachers' evaluations of their students' work over standardized province-wide achievement tests as the best way to measure students' progress. Our commitment is to working with and supporting teachers to assure quality classroom-based authentic assessment.

Please make sure you read and understand our policy on accountability. We will use it in our responses to parents, to districts, and to government. The full text can be found on the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca. Click on "Publications", scroll down to "Policy Handbook", then go to Section 3 – Professional Development, then Item T – Accountability.

For further reading on the topic of accountability, go to the CTF website at www.ctf-fce.ca – select Publications – Perspectives (Professional Development Newsletter) – Summer 2003, Volume 3, Issue 3 – Moving from the Cult of Testing to a Culture of Professional Accountability. Please note that CTF will be hosting a major conference on accountability on May 13-15, 2004 in Ottawa. Information is available from CTF on their website or by contacting NLTA.

Beverley Park is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

CTF National Conference

MOVING FROM A CULT OF TESTING TO A CULTURE OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

May13-15, 2004
Marriott Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario

Accountability is at the forefront of current education debates. It has also been a major focus for the Canadian Teachers' Federation over the past few years. The thrust of this work has been to confront the current obsession with standardized testing and other standardized education reforms, and work towards articulating an alternative model of accountability, one that values and supports teaching and learning. This conference seeks to engage the teaching profession, our education partners and the wider public in a dialogue intended to move us from the harmful cult of testing to a culture of professional accountability.

Alfie Kohn
Ken Leithwood
Lorna Earl
Anne Rodrigue
Maurice Holt
Lise Charland
Andy Hargreaves

Workshop themes include:

- Authentic accountability
- Impact of the media on accountability
- Comparing and contrasting provincial perspectives
- Professional accountability
- Assessment and accountability
- Impact of accountability on equity in education
- Alternative indicators of accountability
- Strategies for taking control of accountability
- Teacher testing: implications & alternatives

For more details call 1-866-283-1505 or visit our website at www.ctf-fce.ca

Helping Students Evaluate Online Information

by JANE TALLIM

Teachers know that students are perfectly adept at finding information on the Internet but that they are often lost when it comes to evaluating it.

Canadian students rely heavily on the Internet for doing homework and research. A national Media Awareness Network (MNet) survey demonstrates that when it comes to finding information for homework, 44 per cent of young Canadians turn to the Internet first, over books from schools (19 percent) and public libraries (16 percent). That's why young people must develop critical thinking skills to evaluate the quality – and just plain truth – of what they find online.

Media Awareness Network was established, in part, to do just that. From it's inception in 1996, MNet's goal has been to equip adults with the resources necessary to help young people understand how the media work, how they gather, construct and disseminate information, and how that information helps to shape our understanding of the world, our attitudes about issues, and the decisions we make about our lives.

Anyone can get published on the Internet!

It's no wonder students turn to the Internet first – it is, after all, the world's largest and most accessible library. However, quantity, and not quality, is often the order of the day. Unlike the traditional publishing process, creating a web site is relatively easy and inexpensive. There are few gatekeepers – no editors or publishers – and no librarians vetting and acquiring materials. It's critical that students know how to check the credibility of a source before making a judgement about content.

In 1999, Media Awareness Network launched Web Awareness Canada, a program to help teachers and librarians understand the emerging issues affecting young people as they go online. Unable to respond to all of the requests to deliver teacher and librarian training on the critical issues, MNet developed a series of online workshops: Kids for Sale (addressing privacy issues); Safe Passage (teaching Internet safety); and Fact or Folly (providing tools for evaluating online information).

Four years later, the workshops are being used in every region of the country. An evaluation of the program conducted last year pointed to an even greater need. Once teachers had participated in the PD workshops, they wanted to bring Internet literacy into the classroom.

In response, MNet has produced *Reality Check! Evaluating Online Information*, – a practical student-centred resource for use in the classroom. Teachers tell MNet that it's as basic a tool for kids today as *Typing Tutor* was for the last generation. *Reality Check!* takes students through a series of lesson modules, building the critical thinking skills necessary to get the most out

of the Internet library, while avoiding its information pitfalls.

Who, What, When, Where, Why and How...
Applying the journalist's basic framework, *Reality Check!* focuses on teaching students to go beyond the obvious, to exercise skepticism, compare information sources, and apply basic investigative tools to their Internet activity. Presented in seven interactive modules, *Reality Check!* provides strategies for optimizing searches, addresses issues of copyright and plagiarism and walks students through a series of questions that help them to evaluate the truth and quality of online information.

For example, *Reality Check's!* "Who" module teaches students to watch out for bias – to recognize the relationship between the purpose of a site and the slant of its content – by investigating the people behind a particular site. One way to gather this information is to look for real world contact information (individual and organization names, a legitimate street address, and a phone number), and a clear explanation of the site's purpose. Students are given tips on how to do domain name and link searches to determine who has registered a URL and what other groups, if any, link to the site. Students are also encouraged to verify information from two other independent on-line sources.

In each module, students visit a number of Web sites specifically chosen to demonstrate the inherent challenges of identifying credible information. These include a legitimate looking site about Martin Luther King that is actually cleverly disguised hate propaganda seeking to discredit the civil rights leader, and a teen site about "real girls like you!" offering games, a chat room, and information about popularity and keeping fit – designed to promote beef consumption!

One thing is clear – it's no longer enough for today's students to be able to read, write and apply critical thinking skills to text-based arguments. The information literacy necessary in a world dominated by multimedia and Internet communication tools demands more sophisticated analysis. With help from Industry Canada's SchoolNet, Media Awareness Network is providing teachers with the tools to do the job.

Jane Tallim, author of Reality Check and Director of Education for Media Awareness Network, is a nationally-recognized expert on Internet issues relating to youth. Jane welcomes your feedback at jtallim@media-awareness.ca.

Wellness Workshops Offered by Your Employee Assistance Program

by KATHY TAYLOR-ROGERS

Have you ever felt that as a staff group you never get an opportunity to talk about anything other than work, your students and what is happening with one or the other or both? Do you feel like you are caught up in the fierce winds of a tornado with work demands, family demands, community demands draining the life right out of you? Do you ever wish that you had the opportunity as a group to stop and take some time to step out of the tornado that your lives have become and figure out what you need to do to slow things down and find a better way to reorganize and better balance your lives? If your answer to any of these questions is 'YES', then it sounds as though a Wellness Workshop might be helpful for you and your staff group.

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has two initiatives. One is the individual support component, the details of which were well articulated in Marie Wall's article in the September/October 2003 issue of *The Bulletin*. This aspect of the program is designed to provide support and resources to address problems, issues and concerns of individual teachers after they have been identified. This is a very essential part of any Employee Assistance Program, as it provides the support and assistance necessary to assist our teachers in working through the personal and professional challenges that can often present obstacles within their lives.

It is the other essential component of our program to which I would like to draw attention – the Wellness Promotion aspect of our Employee Assistance Program. It is through this aspect of the program that we attempt to take a preventive approach to Wellness. Wellness and healthy living, although seemingly a logical direction for life to take, are not as easy to attain as one would think. For many reasons we seem to gravitate toward unhealthy habits within our lives. I question whether much of this can be attributed to the hectic pace at which we live. Some factors that contribute to this hectic pace may be: both parents working outside of the home; increased workload demands; single parent families; varied involvement of children in extra-curricular activities; demands of volunteer activities; responsibilities related to aging parents; and the list goes on. Many of these demands push and pull at us and take up much of our waking hours. This leaves us with little time to sit and reflect on what is happening within our lives; to identify where we are not taking care of ourselves and to make the changes needed to improve our health and overall well being.

Wellness workshops delivered by the EAP's Employee Assistance Coordinators are designed to encourage staff groups to take the time to reflect on their lives and on where they are with regard to healthy and balanced living. They provide an opportunity to conduct a self-inventory to determine which aspects of our lives we are satisfied with and which areas we need to work on to develop a better balance. Finding balance and living a healthier lifestyle takes time, energy and motivation. The first step is to identify that there are problems with the current lifestyle and then determine what changes need to be made and how you can best make them. The next step is to implement your identified plan for change and stick to it. The benefit of tackling this in a supportive atmosphere with your colleagues around you is that through group discussion we often recognize that we are not alone in the struggle to find balance. Discussion can also lend valuable insight into some of the dangers and traps we can fall into if we do not decide to move in a more positive direction. Once decisions to make changes are made teachers can develop support networks to encourage each other in their efforts to stick with their plans for positive change.

The range of topics for workshops is very open with some of the more commonly requested topic areas being: Coping with Stress; Living a More Balanced Life; Team Building; Making Transitions; and Taking Care of Ourselves. When evaluations are received back from workshop presentations, we usually hear from teachers that they would find it beneficial to do a workshop in a related area at least once a year. Workshops not only provide teachers with an opportunity to do some needed self-reflection, they also provide an opportunity for staff groups to share with each other and spend time talking about themselves and their lives on a different level. It can be an effective bonding experience and help colleagues to see each other from a different perspective.

All requests for Wellness Workshops must have the approval of the board and therefore schools must be able to identify how the workshop will support their "School Development Plan". Requests for workshops will have to be submitted to board specialists for consideration based on different deadlines in accordance with the policies of your district. For the purpose of ensuring availability of the Employee Assistance Coordinators it is suggested that requests be submitted at least four weeks prior to the date you would like the workshop delivered. Ability to provide a workshop will be subject to the availability of an Employee Assistance Program Coordinator. As with most activities, workshops are provided on a "first come, first served" basis, therefore the earlier the request is received the better the chance that someone will be available. Wellness workshops can be delivered in a full day or half day time frame. The program will also deliver Wellness presentations in shorter duration but these presentations cannot include the same type of group discussion or interaction. It would be most cost effective for the program if schools within the same area could request workshops within the same time frame. This would allow the program's workshop budget to stretch further and meet more needs with the same dollars.

If you believe that a Wellness Workshop will be beneficial to your staff group, then it may be worthwhile to have the discussion with your colleagues and administration. Once you have a consensus from the group that this is something that everyone supports, then you will need to reach a consensus on which topic might be of most benefit to the group. After these decisions are made it is a matter of deciding who will submit the request to the board and then contact one of the two Employee Assistance Program Coordinators to tentatively book a date. A tentative date can be booked with the Coordinators prior to the final approval from your district. Wellness workshops are a positive way to take a preventative approach to healthy living, as opposed to waiting for problems to develop and dealing with the crisis that results.

Kathy Taylor-Rogers is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Kathy Taylor-Rogers (ext. 242) or Marie Wall (ext. 265).

Tax-Saving Strategies

by Pat Hogan

Move to Nunavut – for New Year's Eve! Imagine the following scene: you are attending a national meeting of teachers from across Canada. During a coffee break, a group of you is discussing teacher's salaries and the tax hit imposed by different provinces. For discussion purposes, let's say you are all comparing a teacher earning $45,000 annually. The teacher from Newfoundland and Labrador tells the group his tax bill, based on the combined federal and provincial tax rates, comes to $11,562. The teacher from Nunavut says his tax bill is $8,506 – 27% less! Teachers from Ontario and British Columbia both come in at approximately $9,367. The Quebec teacher says his tax bill is $11,740!!

While we are not the worst (Quebec is the only province with a more onerous tax hit), it is apparent that your province of residence on December 31 has a critical bearing on your tax burden. So moving to Nunavut or any other province (except Quebec) would be to your advantage – from a purely tax point of view.

Tax Avoidance

This refers to any legitimate practice that a person uses to avoid taxes. This is *not* to be confused with tax evasion, which is illegal! Sad to say, there are only a few ways to legally avoid taxes. Some common examples would be:

a) Profits from the sale of your principal residence are tax-exempt;

b) The proceeds of a life insurance policy are tax-exempt;

c) 50% of your investment returns from capital gains are exempt;

d) Other miscellaneous items: lottery winnings, strike pay, GST benefit, Child Tax Benefit, winnings from gambling for enjoyment, social assistance payments, worker's compensation payments – all are not included in income or are considered "non-taxable" income;

e) Non-taxable benefits given to employees, e.g. financial counseling related to your retirement or re-employment, group insurance plans that your employer cost-shares, education/training courses related to your work, etc.

Tax Deferral

This refers to postponing the recognition of income and the resulting payment of income taxes. It has been compared to an interest-free loan from the Government. Examples would include:

a) RRSP contributions are the best example of saving taxes by deferral. Investments grow tax-free, sheltered inside your RRSP until withdrawal later. There is no better tax break!

b) You or your partner may have "unused RRSP contribution room" remaining from past years. This can be used now or carried forward indefinitely for future use.

c) **Note:** Withdrawals from RRSPs should only be done with the knowledge that:

i) withdrawals are initially subject to a "withholding tax"; ii) withdrawals are then fully taxed on your tax

return at year's end; and iii) withdrawals (excluding the home-buyers and life-long learning plans) cannot be replaced later.
d) Timing your receipts (where possible) so that any gains are not reportable until some future time.

Note: For those who have contributed to their RRSPs to the maximum allowed, there are other ways to achieve tax deferral, notably by the use of an exempt "whole" or "universal" life insurance policy.

Tax Conversion

This refers to the practice of changing highly-taxed income into more favorably-taxed income in a lower tax bracket.

One obvious way is to "income split" with your spouse. Using a "spousal RRSP" would be a way of getting an asset into the hands of the lower-income partner (who has a lower tax bracket), where it will be taxed less heavily.

Another simple technique to achieve "income splitting" is for the higher income spouse to pay the household bills and any investing is done in the lower income spouse's name – where it is taxed at a lower rate.

Understanding Investment Basics

All investments are not created equal, despite the fact that they may produce the same before-tax dollars. The key question becomes: how do they compare in after-tax dollars?

There are three types of investment income. In the following three examples, assume: 1) $100 is the investment income earned in each case; 2) Each investor's tax rate is 38% (22% federal tax plus 16% Nfld. tax).
a) Interest income is fully taxed 100% at your own tax rate. **Example:** Tom has a savings account in the bank and last year he earned $100 interest. Within a 38% tax bracket, Tom will pay $38 taxes and retain $62.00.
b) Dividend income, earned from investment returns from the dividends declared on preferred shares, receives beneficial tax treatment through the use of the federal dividend tax credit. **Example:** Dick earned $100 in dividends from his investment in preferred shares. Within a 38% tax bracket, Dick will pay $30.83 in taxes and retain $69.17.
c) Capital gains, earned from investment returns when the sale price of an asset exceeds its acquisition costs and base price. They are only 50% taxed at your own tax rate. **Example:** Harry earned $100 in capital gains from selling some common shares and equity mutual funds he owned. Within his 38% tax bracket, he will pay $19 tax and retain $81.00.

So given a choice, you get to keep more after-tax dollars if you earn them as capital gains or dividends instead of interest income. *(cont'd.)*

HINT: If you have both RRSPs *and* non-registered accounts, it will save you taxes if you put your cash (money market) and fixed-income securities (bonds, GICs, etc.) inside the RRSP, and put your equity and dividend income investments outside your RRSP – in your non-registered accounts. By doing this, the RRSP will shelter your interest income, which otherwise would be most heavily taxed. The dividend income and capital gains will be taxed in your non-registered accounts but less heavily than otherwise.

If you have only RRSPs, you will probably hold cash, fixed income and equities in a balanced account with a diversified asset allocation reflecting your own investor profile. All are tax-sheltered.

Example: Chris and Caroline, young parents with a toddler, recently bought a house. Chris is the main breadwinner and Caroline works part-time. They want to maximize their after-tax income and use all the tax advantages they can. Their home purchase is a tax-free asset and an investment that will appreciate over time; it will remain tax-free as their principal residence even on its eventual sale (tax avoidance). Naming Caroline as the beneficiary of his life insurance policy will ensure she will collect any death benefit tax-free (tax avoidance).

They also are thinking of starting an RRSP (tax deferral) to augment their future pensions, save on present taxes and benefit from the growth potential of long-term compounding. They decide to use a "spousal RRSP" in Caroline's name to avail of income-splitting later on withdrawal (tax conversion).

They also dream of a holiday trip to Tuscany in a few years and decide to start a special dedicated savings account. Such an account will be "non-registered" and its investment returns will be taxed annually, unlike their "registered" retirement savings plan.

They first discussed buying a Canada Savings Bond (which pays interest income) through payroll deduction, but are now considering a good quality, low-risk dividend or equity mutual fund, (which pays dividend income or capital gains). Such an investment vehicle has the potential for much higher returns and is taxed much more favorably. They are content to take on more risk with the mutual fund than with the safety of the bond. In return, the mutual fund will hopefully reward them with enhanced pre-tax performance and much better after-tax returns. Their final decision was to purchase the equity fund. It will be purchased (and its returns taxed) in Caroline's name only as the lower income spouse.

It is worth pointing out that Caroline must earn a nominal 4% on her non-registered investment just to break even after her taxes and inflation are considered. Even if she is fortunate to earn 8%, this will be diluted down to a 2.8% return after taxes and inflation! Indeed, taxes and inflation are the two demons that haunt every investor. They extract their toll in non-registered accounts annually and even in RRSP accounts eventually on withdrawal.

Income Tax Preparation

There are ways of reducing your taxes by paying particular attention to the annual preparation of your income tax returns.

a) Ensure you are taking advantage of all possible deductions. A deduction is claimed to reduce your taxable income. It's an amount that is, in essence, not subject to tax. **Example:** Caroline's Child Care Expenses claim for $5,000 (assuming her 26% tax rate) will reduce her taxes and save her $1,300. **Example:** Chris will claim his RRSP contribution to Caroline's spousal plan on his tax return. His $5,000 contribution will save him $1,900 (assuming his 38% tax rate). So, the higher a taxpayer's income (and tax rate), the more a tax deduction reduces his/her taxes.

To conclude, all deductions require an outlay of cash and the deductions only recover some of this outlay.

b) Are you using all available non-refundable credits? **Example:** Chris claims the interest on his student loan; Caroline claims the medical expenses as the lower-income spouse. Some credits can be transferred from family members, such as a spouse or a child attending university.

c) Using tax software, such as *QUICKTAX* or other products, can help you keep track of all the details, assist in determining who should claim the deduction or credit and prevent math errors too.

d) There are all kinds of special tax considerations for young parents, students, salespeople, employees, retirees, those experiencing marriage breakdown, the self-employed, seniors, investors, the disabled, etc.

e) Educate yourself on tax matters. Bookstores abound with books like Tim Cestnick's *Winning the Tax Game, 2003* and many others.

Income taxes are the undisputed biggest expense in our personal finances throughout our lives. Any steps we can take to keep these expenses to a minimum will free us to maximize our ability to pursue other financial and personal goals. A Financial Security Advisor or Certified Financial Planner (CFP) can assist in finding ways to save you taxes.

Pat Hogan is a retired principal/teacher and life member of NLTA. He is now a licensed Financial Security Advisor with Facey Financial Planning & Consulting. Pat would welcome inquiries, with no obligation, at 709-754-2143 or email: hogan@roadrunner.nf.net.

4TH ANNUAL PROVINCIAL FAIR

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

The Fair will profile job opportunities and related information for students, teachers or others interested in entry into the profession.

Are you looking for a job in education?
Are you an Education graduate?
Substitute teacher?
Or looking for a career change?

The Provincial Teacher Recruitment Fair is the place for you.

Date: Thursday, May 13, 2004
9:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Place: Memorial University Club,
5th Floor,
Arts and Administration Building
St. John's Campus of
Memorial University

The Provincial Recruitment Fair is a project of the Provincial Advisory Group on Teacher Supply and Demand, in partnership with Memorial University of Newfoundland; the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association; Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador; and the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association.

For More Information contact:
Evelyn Bennett
Tel: 726-8144
e-mail: ebennett@roadrunner.nf.net

Information booths will be set up by

- School Districts
- the NLTA
- Department of Education
- Faculty of Education *and other Educational Partners*

Calendar

PRIMARY/ELEMENTARY SIC CONFERENCE
April 29-30, 2004
Hotel Marystown and Sacred Heart Elementary, Marystown. Keynote speakers: Miriam Treheame and Dr. Myrle Vokey. Details regarding sessions and presenters can be found at www.bpsb.nf.ca/cpet. For further information contact Theresa Jarvis, Tel: 709-891-6100, ext. 224, tjarvis@bpsb.nf.ca or Marlene Biggin, Tel: 709-891-6100, ext. 244, mbiggin@bpsb.nf.ca.

CANADIAN COLLEGE OF TEACHERS 44TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE
April 29 – May 1, 2004
Edmonton, AB. Theme: *Edmonton Schools, a prototype of programming mosaic*. Cost: $250. For further information and registration contact Canadian College of Teachers, Box 57157, 2020 Sherwood Drive, Sherwood Park, AB, T8A 5L7, Fax: 780-922-2885, E-mail: hdj@shaw.ca.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS CONFERENCE
May 19-21, 2004
Battery Hotel, St. John's. Contact Linda Pike, Tel: 709-754-2440/41, Fax: 709-754-1805; E-mail: linda@ves.k12.nf.ca.

PALAEO WEEK FOR TEACHERS
July 19-23, 2004
Drumheller, AB. This year's program will have educators excavating dinosaur bones from a quarry that has yielded fossils from one of the largest types of duckbilled dinosaurs known. Working with Royal Tyrrell Museum educators and palaeontologists, teachers will get the latest scientific information available, and a host of resources to help them apply the information in the classroom. Cost: $400 including taxes, program materials, field trips, lunches and educational resources. For information and details on registration visit www.tyrrellmuseum.com or call 403-823-7707.

PRACTICAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
August 17-18, 2004
St. John's. A two-day summer institute aimed at enhancing teachers' classroom discipline techniques. Topics include: preventative discipline techniques; dealing with disruptive and defiant students; handling high level incidents in class; tracking behavior and communicating with administration. Location: MUN Arts Annex, Room 1043. Fee: $100. Please make cheques payable to Practical Classroom Management Consulting, P.O. Box 2033, Pictou, Nova Scotia, B0K 1H0. Please attach mailing address, telephone info and e-mail with cheque. For further information e-mail pcmc@eastlink.ca.

TEACHER'S EDUCATION ADVENTURE
August 22-28, 2004
Learn the answers to many fascinating questions as you walk the Tablelands, peek into tide pools, and explore bogs, streams, and other wetlands in Gros Morne National Park. The Teacher's Education Adventure is offered by Parks Canada in partnership with the Department of Education, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, Newfoundland and Labrador School Districts, the Red Ochre Regional Economic Board and the Gros Morne Co-operating Association. Registration: $350 per person (includes meals, accommodations at local motels, and travel during the Institute). For further information contact Dorothy Parsons, Education Specialist, Western Newfoundland and Labrador Field Unit, Parks Canada, Tel: 709-458-2417, Fax: 709-458-2059, E-mail: Dorothy.Parsons@pc.gc.ca.

MUSIC SPECIAL INTEREST COUNCIL CONFERENCE
October 21-23, 2004
Holiday Inn, St. John's. Contact Mary Dinn, President and Conference Chair, Tel: 709-745-1253 or e-mail: mdinn@roadrunner.nf.net.

S.M.A.R.T. (SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS ACCESSING RECENT TECHNOLOGY) T3 REGIONAL CONFERENCE
October 22-23, 2004
Fairmont Hotel, St. John's. For details, including online registration, contact the conference web site at www.stemnet.nf.ca/smart/.

NLTA

BRANCH ELECTIONS

MAY – JUNE 2004

- Would you like to be more involved in decisions affecting your professional and personal future?
- Do you feel you have skills or abilities which you can offer to your professional Association?
- Would you like to be more informed about, and involved in, the internal operations of your Association?

Then consider becoming a member of your branch leadership team by offering yourself for a position on the branch executive when branch elections are held this spring. **Contact a member of your branch executive or your NLTA School Representative for more details.**

Dates to Remember

April 2004

Apr 30	**Deadline:** Deferred Salary Leave Applications
Apr 30	**Deadline:** Year-end resignation from contract

May 2004

May 7	**Deadline:** Notification by Board of layoff
May 9-15	Branch Election Week
May 20	**Deadline:** PD Fund applications

June 2004

June 11-12	NLTA Executive Meeting
June 15	Deadline: Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests